Collection of Premium by LIC from Maharashtra

1261. SHRI ANNASAHIB M.K. PATIL : Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state :

(a) the total amount collected as premium by Life Insurance Corporation from the Policy holders in Maharashtra during the last three years and the number of insured persons in the State alongwith the comparative figures of the same in other States; and

(b) the estimated investment made by LIC for various developmental projects in Maharashtra during the above period?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM) : (a) and (b). The requisite information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

Export Policy of Public Sector Undertakings

1262. SHRI SANDIPAN THORAT : Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government have formulated any special export strategy for Public Sector Undertakings especially in heavy industry in the wake of liberalisation and globalisation of exports;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the achievements made so far during each of the last three years; and

(c) the steps taken to tap huge export potential of PSUs through adoption of package of incentives and upgradation technologies in identified areas to enable them to have access in international market with distinct advantage of globally cost effective quality products?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI BOLLA BULLI RAMAIAH) : (a) to (c). The existing export policy has been formulated for export trade in general. No omnibus export policy for Public Sector Undertakings (PSUs) especially in the heavy industry has been prescribed. However, in the wake of liberalisation/globalisation of exports, the public sector undertakings in their field of operations including heavy industry have re-oriented their export strategies in a manner consistent with the liberalised economy and competitive environment in the international market. The re-structuring process as a part of diversification activities has already been initiated by PSUs which includes formation of joint ventures with foreign/Indian partners to get continuous access to technology as well as market strengths of the partners. The renewed efforts have already been initiated for better quality and cost effectiveness.

No Central Registry is maintained of contractual arrangements in respect of export transactions entered into by different PSUs of the Government of India.

Funds for Minimum Needs

1263. SHRI CHITTA BASU : Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Prime Minister had assured at the Chief Ministers Concerence held in July this year to release adequate funds or minimum needs for infrastructures particularly in health care, education, drinking water, roads, rural electrification and housing;

(b) if so, the amount assured and the amount disbursed to the State Governments, Statewise;

(c) the status report of the Projects' undertaken in these areas;

(d) whether some State Governments have informed about non-availability of assured amount; and

(e) if so, the response of the Government thereto?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM) : (a) to (e). A Conference of Chief Ministers held on 4-5 July, 1996 identified seven Basic Minimum Services under the Minimum Needs Programme for priority attention and complete coverage in a time bound manner. These seven basic services are (i) 100 per cent coverage of provision of safe drinking water in rural and urban areas; (ii) 100 per cent coverage of primary health service facilities in rural and urban areas; (iii) universalisation of primary education; (iv) provision of public housing assistance to all shelterless poor families; (v) extension of mid-day meal programme in primary schools to all rural blocks and urban slums and disadvantaged sections; (vi) provision of connectivity to all unconnected villages and habitations; and (vii) streamlining the public distribution system with focus upon the poor.

For the financial year 1996-97, the Central Government has provided an additional amount of Rs. 2466 crores over the interim budget provisions as Central Assistance for States in the Central budget, to increase the availability of funds for these services. Out of this amount, Rs. 250 crores has been earmarked for slum dwellers. The remaining Rs. 2216 crores has been allocated to States and will be in addition to the provisions already made in the annual plans of States for these seven identified Basic Minimum Services.

Some of the State Governments have represented for early release of the additional Central assistance for Basic Minimum Services and slum development schemes. Based on the allocations made by the Planning Commission 25 per cent of the total amount as the first instalment for the Basic Minimum Services including slum development Schemes has been released to the States on November 11, 1996. The second and third instalments at the rate of 25 percent each of the total amount will be released to the States during the months of December, 1996 and January, 1997. The balance will be released in March, 1997 on receipt of progress report from the Department of